



Your Business Flow

Created by Christopher Briggs

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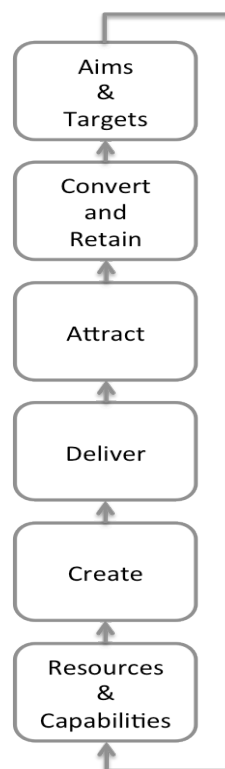
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When the parts of a larger entity work well together there is a flow to it. The organs in your body working together to keep you alive, the elements of an engine that create drive and thrust, the individual musicians playing together in an orchestra. Processes run throughout and the whole can be broken down into cause and effect stages. Your lungs expand, take in air and oxygen from it is absorbed into the blood heading for your heart, which then pumps it and the oxygen around your body. Something happens which causes something else to happen and so on. It's a series of cause and effect stages. It's a system.

A business is a system that flows from one cause and effect stage to the next. Get this right and your business will naturally flow through key stages and your aims will be realised. A good strategy will guide you through this flow and show you what to do at each stage.

This image shows how a business can flow. I've broken down this flow into 6 key stages. You can have more or fewer stages as best suits your business.



Aims and Targets

At the top of the flow there are your targets or aims. For a private business, that aim or those targets will usually be financial. For a public organisation, a college or a not-for-profit organisation like a charity, this aim could be their mission. Let's stick with private companies.

Convert and Retain

To hit your financial targets you have to convert prospects into paying customers. These prospects must believe that what you are offering is worth more to them than the cost of buying it. It's crucial therefore that you know them well; know their desires, their wants and their needs. Having met their needs you then want to make sure that you keep them.

Attract

To convert ideal prospects to paying customers you need to identify who they are and attract them. Again, you must know your ideal prospects well and create the value proposition-based messages that will attract them to you. It is no good having the best product or service if your prospects are not aware of you and so you must create and implement a strong marketing strategy that will cut through the noise and resonate with your target audience.

Deliver

To attract and convert prospects you need to be able to deliver what you've promised. Make sure you have the internal processes that deliver your product or service, manage customer acquisition and engagements and meet national and local regulations.

Create

Of course, you need something to deliver and so you need to create this value that you want customers to pay for. Again, in this noisy world we live in, unless you're simply competing on price, you need to create something that not just meets the needs of your customer but meets it better than your competitors.

Know what your customer's priority needs are and meet them. For a product company the top priority might be innovation or manufacturing quality. For a service company it might be reliability of delivery or flexibility and for, what I call, an 'expertise' company, the number 1 priority might be the quality of the workmanship.

Resources and Capabilities

In order to create this value you need to have the necessary resources and capabilities. You'll need to have tangible assets such as money, property, equipment and people. And intangible assets, such as the right expertise, skills and attributes and values in your people, the right information infrastructure and an



organisation that is lead well, has the right culture and people who work well and are aligned to each other and the company's priorities.

As you see from the diagram, the cause and effect flow is closed as money from the revenue created is fed back into the resources and capabilities so that better products and services can be created and delivered and more customers attracted and converted.

The power of mapping out and thinking about your businesses in this way cannot be understated. By breaking your business down into a natural flow and these key stages you will:

- Better see the whole of your business and how each part connects and impacts the other;
- See how your business really works and more easily assess strong, weak and vulnerable areas;
- Drill down into individual stages and their systems and processes within to make sure that all areas of your business works and that weak links are identified and strengthened;
- Create a strategy that aligns with how your business really works;
- Be able to identify what you should be focused on and what you should delegate or outsource;
- Have far more control over the running of your business.